

A
GENERAL REPLY

TO THE SEVERAL

ANSWERS, &c.

OF A

LETTER *Written to a* NOBLE LORD,

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

EDMUND BURKE.

LONDON:

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AND WARRERS &c

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LONDON:

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POLITICAL investigation, if at all connected with measures immediately before the Publick, never fails to involve an infinity of misrepresentation : much of it arising from ignorance and perversion of facts and circumstances ; much from the spirit of party, ever more emulous of propagating its tenets, than of elucidating their propriety ; and much from a sort of personal enmity cherished by weak people against those whose principles and persuasions embrace objects not within the pale of their estimation.

From these and similar sources, Mr. Burke could not but have reason to expect a deluge of trash on the subject of his late Letter ; and he has not been disappointed.

His Reflections on the French Revolution gave birth to innumerable and extraneous publications : innumerable, as the subject necessarily engaged the attention of the whole world ; extraneous, as scarcely any of his commentators omitted to honour his work with annotations as invidious and personal, as they were injudicious and foreign to the nature of the inquiry. Such being a part of the effects produced by the Reflections, the Letter to a Noble Lord, affording some pretext for personal disquisition, could not fail of calling forth the powers of those who fancy themselves possessed of political acumen, when their minds are only irritated by political asperity. The consequences have been conformable. The writers seem less anxious, and certainly less able, to trace Mr. Burke's conduct and principles, than to expose their own. With whatever intention they may have written, they have proved how much stronger are their passions

sions and prejudices than their means of knowledge, or their powers of logick. In remarking on Mr. Burke, they have discovered how easy it is for men to libel themselves.

Among Mr. Burke's opponents it seems a matter of controversy, whether he merited the Pension, which has given rise to this warfare, for services long since performed,* or for services

* " Far be it from me to depreciate the value of Mr. Burke's *former* services; or to detract from the merit of his *former* labours. I never can forget, and the nation never can forget, the noble manner in which he stood up during the American war, in defence of those rights of man which he has since so strenuously questioned and attacked. —You will observe that Mr. Burke rests all his claim to compensation upon his *former* services."

A Vindication of the Duke of Bedford's Attack upon Mr. Burke's Pension. By Thomas George Street.

Thus because some of Mr. Burke's *former* services corresponded with the political ideas of this Mr. Street, and because some of those services, though constitutional, were ignorantly supposed to be inimical to the interests of the Crown, and *therefore*, no doubt, highly gratifying to the same Mr. Street, he is lavish in his commendations of a conduct which another opponent virulently condemns.

vices of a later date, or whether he merited it at all. On these points the literary Remarkers are by no means agreed. They, however, unite in giving him credit for talents which he, perhaps, does not possess in the eminent degree they are so willing to allow. The arguments which they cannot confute they would fain persuade their readers have nothing to recommend them but the style of the composition: so that the excellence which they

“ You steadily,” says M. C. Browne, “ supported the principle of our *right* to tax America.” So that, after all, Mr. Burke was not defending the “ rights of man” in that business: he was consistently defending the constitutional rights of Great Britain. But he does *not*, as this Mr. Street takes upon him to assert, “ rest *all* his claim to compensation upon his *former* services.” He believes all his late services, as they were equally well meant and constitutional, equally entitled to publick approbation. And if Mr. Burke’s principles during the American war were such as Mr. Street *admires*, and those which Mr. Burke maintained respecting the French revolution be such as Mr. Street “ *detests*,” the political reputation of Mr. Burke ought to suffer no injury, and indeed cannot suffer any injury, from the impeachments of men so prone, from passion or prejudice, to make broad distinctions where there is no shade of difference.

pretend

pretend to compliment in the first instance, is, in the next, brought to counteract its own efficacy. But with such writers this is nothing new. Of the praise which they bestow on their adversary they always hope to participate by reflection. It is a pity that they so seldom succeed.

Whatever may be Mr. Burke's merits these gentlemen seem as incapable of combining them as the Duke of Bedford is of appreciating them. To some act of his life each of them appears willing to allot some portion of approbation. A measure long since pursued, a conduct adopted at a given period, on a particular occasion, is recurred to as an act of patriotism ; not for the intention with which it was then embraced, or the effect which it then produced ; but because the like measure, or a similar conduct, might at this moment contribute to the accomplishment of projects as inimical to the political welfare of the country, as at the former period they may have been found salutary. I allude to no specifick instance. Who, except such partial and superficial reasoners, does not know, that to
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prosecute any measure beyond certain limits, is to defeat the proposed end?

But it is not so much Mr. Burke's Pension that excites the furor of the Bedfords and the Lauderdale, as his principles. It is confessed, that he is not so much censured for accepting, as the ministers are criminated for bestowing, rewards on a man whose conduct and whose writings are found to operate against the views of those who wish to tolerate, in this country, French principles and French freedom. And in order to render him and his pension the more obnoxious, he is represented as having renounced principles which he formerly held : that the leading tenets in his book on the French Revolution are contradictory to those on which he has acted in his parliamentary capacity ; and he is branded with the odium of that inconsistency which always implies political turpitude, and self-interested tergiversation.

Part of this charge arises from incapacity in those who make it, and part from their malignity. For what are the points of inconsistency, and what do they amount to? It should

should seem that Mr. Burke, in expressing his sentiments respecting the Revolutionists of France, had occasion to reprobate their conduct, and to justify that reprobation by describing those excellencies of the British Constitution, and those principles of civil liberty and of political economy which the Revolutionists had violated, or which their system necessarily tended to violate; and without a regard to which it was utterly impossible they should found on any stability a government of any description, at all calculated for a great empire. In executing this task, Mr. Burke is said not only to have mistaken the principles on which the French Revolution was commenced, but to have misrepresented the principles of the British government; and to have promulgated opinions unfriendly to civil liberty, and subversive of his own doctrines on former occasions. He denies it. He contends, and he has, indeed, already made it appear, that neither in his conduct nor in his doctrines has he at all swerved from those Whig principles, which form the basis of that Constitution which it must ever afford him satisfaction

faction to recollect he has had the honour to defend, as well against the too powerful influence of the Crown, as against the encroachments of the People. Every one will recollect his conduct on the former occasion. But on the latter, his services though, as he conceives, no less useful, because no less constitutional, appear to have been purposely erased from those tablets which contain the records of such acts only as are supposed to diminish the privileges of the higher orders, and to add to those of the democrattick body of the state. Let it be recollected then, that Mr. Burke " was the first man who, on the hustings, at a popular election, rejected the authority of instructions from constituents ; or who, in any place, has argued so fully against it. Perhaps the discredit into which that doctrine of compulsive instructions, under our constitution, is since fallen, may be due, in a great degree, to his opposing himself to it in that manner, and on that occasion.—The Reforms in Representation, and the Bills for shortening the duration of Parliaments, he uniformly and steadily opposed for many years together, in contradiction to
many

many of his best friends.—He opposed those of the church clergy who had petitioned the House of Commons to be discharged from the subscription. At the same he promoted the clause that gave the dissenting teachers another subscription in the place of that which was taken away.—People at that time could *distinguish between a difference in conduct, under a variation of circumstances, and an inconsistency in principle* *.”

Indeed one might be led to imagine, from the inexhaustible jargon of Mr. Burke's opponents, that the British constitution doth not consist of Three Estates ; but that it is a government wholly subservient to the fluctuating will, and fleeting caprices, of the governed. For as long as the principles of a mixed constitution be admitted, Mr. Burke can want no more than that admission to “ justify to consistency every thing he has said and done during the course of his political life.” In nothing have his adversaries more exposed themselves than in this reiterated charge of inconsistency.

* Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.

Most of the writers against the late Letter seem totally ignorant of the subject. So conscious is Mr. Burke of possessing the virtue of consistency, at least, that I may safely repeat what has been elsewhere observed, that “ if he could venture to value himself upon any thing, it is on this very virtue of consistency that he would value himself the most. Strip him of this, and you leave him naked indeed !”

Weighed in the petty balance, measured on the narrow scale, of a mere partizan, it is not Mr. Burke, nor any man who shall be an active Senator, that can possibly escape the calumny of inconsistency. It is the common catchword of the party, whose exclusive interests he apparently opposes for the preservation of the united interests of all. Added to this, it must be considered, that almost every new question raises a host of speculative opinions: and that in political, as well as in other researches, men contend full as violently for theory as for practice. Hence it is clear, that “ he who thinks that the British constitution ought to consist of the three members,
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of three very different natures, of which it does actually consist, and thinks it his duty to preserve each of those members in its proper place, and with its proper proportion of power, must, as each shall happen to be attacked, vindicate the three several parts on the several principles peculiarly belonging to them. He cannot assert the democrattick part on the principles on which monarchy is supported; nor can he support monarchy on the principles of democracy; nor can he maintain aristocracy on the grounds of the one or of the other, or of both. All these he must support on grounds that are totally different; though practically they may be, and happily with us they are, brought into one harmonious body.

A man could not be consistent in defending such various, and, at first view, discordant parts of a mixed constitution, without that sort of inconsistency with which Mr. Burke stands charged †." This may be, and probably is, incomprehensible, if not to the understandings, at least to the prejudices of Mr.

† Appeal.

Burke's detractors. And yet it is a conduct which, in the ordinary concerns of life, is daily adopted by those who cannot discern its political propriety. Judged then by the constitution, and not by party prejudice: judged by the united body of the state, and not by a distinct member of it only; judged as a real supporter of the King, Lords, and Commons, and of the respective powers and prerogatives of each, and not as the varying follower of men and names; in short, judged by principle and not by passion, Mr. Burke is, perhaps, the last man in this country that should be taxed with inconsistency. Brought thus to the test, even the various passages in his works "upon very multifarious matter," which have been most absurdly deduced * as proofs of mercenary tergiversation will be found to evince constitutional consistency and political rectitude. If they are otherwise understood, the head of the reader must be strangely influenced by the perversions of his heart:

* See a Letter to H. Duncombe, Esq. by William Miles.

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Though it requires no great skill so to select and garble the sentences of a writer as to make him apparently guilty of contradictions the most gross, and of positions the most indefensible. And this, indeed, is by no means uncommon among a certain class of writers, whose chief aim is to solicit vulgar applause by giving countenance to vulgar slander*. But it is, literally, like the clown, “ speaking more than is set down to him,” and is a “ most pitiful deception in the fool that useth it.”

On the general charge of inconsistency much common place declamation has been used; but by no one fact or argument, has it yet been proved. Considering the impressions the conduct of the French must have made on the mind of Mr Burke; and that, writing

* This has been done with great dexterity by Mr. Burke's opponents, and even by way of MOTTO to W. Miles's Pamphlet. It is exactly of a piece with that species of quotation which the pious and learned Author of the “ Letters on Infidelity” mentions as the deistical mode of proving from Scripture not only the lawfulness but the duty of SUICIDE: “ *Then Judas went out and hanged himself—Go thou and do likewise!*”

under

under those impressions, he might very easily and very naturally have been seduced into opinions and expressions not exactly conformable to the ideas he had always taught as a lover of liberty ; it is a fact not less singular than honourable to him, that in his " Reflections" he has never permitted his passions to run counter to his principles. And he has repeatedly challenged, † and does yet challenge, those who assert the contrary, to shew, " on what part of that publication, or on what expression that might have escaped him in that work, is any man authorized to charge Mr. Burke with a contradiction to the line of his conduct and to the current of his doctrines ? The pamphlet is in the hands of his accusers, let them point out the passage if they can."

A writer indeed of some talent*, and whose well-drawn character of the late Queen of France so exactly accords with Mr. Burke's

† See Appeal.

* See Mr. Burke's *Conduct and Pretensions Considered, &c.* By a Royalist.

ideas of that illustrious Princess, has taken
 occasion to assert, that “ it was by an unre-
 “ mitting display, in the House of Commons,
 “ of such talents and such principles as Mr.
 “ Burke possesses, that this country lost Ame-
 “ rica. And that *Paine* has clearly deduced
 “ the origin of the French Revolution, and
 “ consequently all its enormities, from the
 “ inflammatory harangues and democratick
 “ positions at that time disseminated with all
 “ possible industry, and maintained with all
 “ possible tenacity, by this grand leader of
 “ opposition. And it is not less true than
 “ singular, that, in the space of a few years,
 “ all those powers of Eloquence which were
 “ exerted to the utmost in favour of the Re-
 “ bellion and Revolution of America, should
 “ be turned, with equal vigour, and with
 “ equal ardour, against the very principles
 “ and the very arguments from which the
 “ French imbibed that rebellious turpitude
 “ and revolutionary rancour which have fitted
 “ them to enjoy, with a sort of diabolical en-
 “ thusiasm, the execration of the surrounding
 “ universe.” The writer has fallen into an
 error

error not uncommon among those who deal in general positions ; who imagine that there is a similarity between the American contest and the French Revolution, because the professed object of each was the attainment of unpossessed liberty, or the resumption of violated rights : and that he whose opinions were favourable to the cause of America must, to be consistent, espouse that of the French. But the cases are widely different. Indeed that of France admits of no comparison with any thing, in the shape of reformation, revolution, or national convulsion, that has preceded it. It stands alone. It is one of those gigantick monstrosities which may long have been hatching in the womb of Time, but which being suddenly brought forth, astonishes and terrifies. It is an entirely new object of contemplation. It mocks the line and compass of all political calculation. It overwhelms and confounds all the powers of the mind. The light of philosophy, the learning of ages, and the wisdom of the wise, teach us nothing on this topick ; they are lost in vague surmise and imbecile conclusions. Whatever might
have

have been Mr. Burke's conduct respecting America, no person was warranted in calling upon him to support the French Revolution. It is one thing to endeavour to compromise between a mother country and her colonies on the principles of established government, and it is another to abet the extermination of all religious, all moral, and all social order from a vast Empire, seeking liberty; but seeking it among the dregs of a flagitious philosophy, and in the very kennels of the most polluted licentiousness. After due inquiry, it will be found, that, on the subject of the American war*, Mr. Burke "never had any opinions which he has since had occasion to retract, or which he has ever retracted." And if he could at all hope for candour, the language and the opinions he then held would be found not only consistent with Whig principles, but with the language and opinions he has ever held, and will ever continue to hold. If those who take the trouble of comparing the

* See the Appeal, where the matter is treated at large, and the representations of Mr. Burke's adversaries confuted.

sentiments Mr. Burke has uttered at different periods, and on different occasions, cannot reduce them to the standard of the Constitution, and of Whig principles, he has only to lament that their powers of discrimination are so infinitely surpassed by those of their prejudices.

On all great constitutional questions it appears that no man can be entitled to the praise of consistency from the politicians that form the body of Mr. Burke's commentators, but such as having once supported a popular measure;—they will not recollect that all measures are popular that are constitutional;—shall ever afterwards support the democratical part of the community in every measure, and on every occasion, however adverse to the spirit of that Constitution, which, they will not recollect, is “made up of *balanced powers*.” And they not less violently than absurdly, estimate a man's enmity to the freedom of his country, in proportion to the occasional supports which, in his political capacity, he must necessarily give to the aristocracy and the monarchy; that is, to each part of the Constitution,

tion, as it shall happen to be attacked. For such politicians there can be no apology that is not founded in hypocrisy or ignorance. Either they do not comprehend the system they pretend to admire; or they seek its destruction, by misrepresenting the principles of the Government, and the conduct of the Governors.

But the charge of inconsistency more immediately urged against Mr. Burke, is with respect to Economy. His Grace of Bedford seems to think that Mr. Burke, in accepting of his Pension, has departed from his own ideas and his own system on this subject. This, being the direct occasion of Mr. Burke's late letter, is in that letter fully refuted. And the only conclusion to be drawn from a candid disquisition is, that his Grace, however practically adroit in the management of an ample fortune, so as to acquire a reputation for great prudence and uncommon discretion, has not sufficiently studied the science of political economy to judge of that which he condemns. He is yet but a young Senator. The inquiry his Grace would institute would be

useless, since it could afford no information, but to those who, like the noble Duke and the Earl of Lauderdale, either could not, or would not, comprehend the nature or the extent of the services for which Mr. Burke's pension was granted. Their curiosity is now gratified. They have more information than their projected investigation could have produced. I forbear to say any thing of the indecency towards the Crown which such an inquiry implies. Because I am not sure that such an indecency was not included in the motive for discussion.

If then, and surely of that there can remain no doubt, Mr. Burke has uniformly, and strenuously, and consistently defended the Constitution, as composed of King, Lords, and Commons, in many years services, and under many trying circumstances, let not the unsolicited remuneration of a gracious Sovereign, who has witnessed and approved of his exertions, become matter of reproach to him. He cannot but deem it equally honourable to the country and to himself. Indeed, some of his adversaries admit that he has deserved
well

well of the Publick : that he has merited his pension* : but they contend that it should have

* Even one of the *Hackney School*, amidst his *classical fulminations* against Mr. Burke, says, ‘ As to the pension of Mr. Burke, if the present Ministers, or any other set of men, had come forward to the Parliament and the Publick, in a tone, frank, manly, and explicit: “ Mr. Burke, for a considerable portion of his life, has devoted in his senatorial capacity, those talents and accomplishments,

“ Of which all Europe rings from side to side,”

“ to the service of the State, and has benefited his country, in some important instances: it is our wish to recompense the merits of so great a man, and to provide for the repose of his declining years, in a publick remuneration, sanctioned by the suffrage of his country; and we apply to that country for this purpose.” If, I say, a proposal of such a nature had been made, and in some such manner; no man, I venture to assert, would have hesitated a single suspicion of dislike. All parties and descriptions* could not have failed to join in their applause of a measure, apportioned with discretion, not less honourable to the donors, than the subject of it.’

Wakefield's Reply to Mr. Burke's Letter.

* This author, who writes “ by the card,” it is presumed here means “ Every party :” for though “ all parties and descriptions could not have failed”—*some might*.

been

been conferred by Parliament. It is the peculiar and constitutional province, as it is the gracious pleasure, of the Crown, to reward those Servants of the Publick, whose labours entitle them to such distinguished approbation. And it is no less the province and constitutional right of Parliament to canvass this as well as every other act of Government. Mr. Burke knows this: He has asserted and maintained it. His late Letter implies no question of this right. He meant that letter as such a justification of his acceptance of a Pension as the Duke of Bedford's attack seemed to require.

In one thing, at least, will the sapient annotators on Mr. Burke allow him the virtue of consistency in its utmost latitude. They uniformly ascribe to him a predilection for *Popery*: and he is favoured with all the gross epithets which modern liberality so abundantly lavishes on blind superstition. It is always the fate of cunning, as well as of folly, to overshoot its mark. Because Mr. Burke has expressed, and that with a warmth and vehemence becoming the occasion, those sentiments which surely every good mind must feel, for the calamities

mities inflicted on a body of people employed as the ministry of a national religion, he is directly accused of maintaining the principles of that religion, of subscribing to its doctrines, of supporting its errors, of being himself a member of its community. As if it were impossible or improper to feel for the miseries of mankind, and to execrate the authors of boundless mischief, without countenancing the follies, and defending the speculative absurdities, of those who suffer. That religion is particularly obnoxious to this Government, and in this Country. Hence is Mr. Burke, in common with many high and distinguished characters, who love their country, and revere the Establishment, calumniated, as holding religious tenets subversive of that political creed, on the faith and observance of which is built the superstructure of our national felicity. It was reserved for those profound scrutinizers of the human heart, the doctors of the philosophy of new lights, to discover in a scholar of the Eighteenth century, opinions long since exploded, and doctrines which even Ignorance herself has long since disowned.

disowned. But the task is as easy, as it is common, to attribute obliquity of mind to those whose actions are not sufficiently reprehensible to answer the purposes of detraction. Though we cannot make a conduct, we can fabricate a creed. And it is wonderful with what facility a "maker of books" can swell his libels * when he once assumes this privilege of looking with the eyes of the new phi-

* A curious instance of this occurs in "A Letter to Henry Duncombe, Esq. by William Miles," in which the deep-read author, to prove Mr. Burke unworthy of his *Pension*, employs many pages and some very exceptionable and indelicate language, in descanting on "miracles, relicks, dispensations, plenary indulgences, pardons, and all the disgusting buffooneries which imposture, aided by credulity and power, had contrived, manufactured, and converted into stable, lucrative, merchantable commodities, for the triple purpose of enriching a profligate voluptuous priesthood, cozening the deluded nations of the earth, and brutalizing the human species over the whole surface of the habitable globe!" All this is very much to the purpose. In proportion, however, as it exhibits the follies and superstitions of Popery, it may serve to convince his readers, that William Miles, and others of his way of thinking, must entertain an idea that they are *very wise*, and that Mr. Burke is *very ignorant*.

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losophy into the mind of the man he wishes to defame.

It were a work as endless to answer, as it is difficult to comprehend, the objections of common-place writers. *Damnanti quod non intelligunt.* Indeed they generally carry their own confutation. What, one might ask, shall be said to such as read Mr. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution as a defence of "discarded tyranny and superstition*?" Evidently they cannot at all understand either the intention or the words of the Author. To reply to such writers is to multiply books without advancing knowledge. It is in vain to direct the arrows of Reason against the united shields of prejudice and folly.

To be at all attached to any form of Government, or to any religious Establishment, tending to controul that licentiousness which deceives with a shew of liberty, is a crime sufficient to draw down the vengeance of the sans-culotte philosophers. "To fear God; " to look up with awe to Kings; with af-

* Miles's Letter.

“ fection to Parliaments; with duty to Magistrates; with reverence to Priests; and with respect to Nobility* ;” includes, it should seem, the whole code of superstition : and he must needs be wedded to Popery, and an enemy to the human race, who does not lend a helping hand to effectuate the demolition of the fabricks that are raised on these foundations. And yet, such is the inconsistency of such philosophy, they who are loud in their cries against this order of things, and as sedulous as they are insidious in their attempts to abolish these religious, these rational, these necessary distinctions, without which no Government can subsist, no society can be formed ; they, I say, who would break these bonds that keep the world in order, who would loose the silver cord that binds us in civilization, and are diligent to destroy the harmony of the universe ; they are vehement in contending for the purity and the excellence of the British Constitution !—with their lips they praise it, though their hearts are set on its destruction. It is

* Reflections.

an artful and a wicked policy, highly worthy of the new sect, alternately to extol and to degrade, the better to accomplish the project of subversion.

Well, indeed, may Mr. Burke be stigmatised with scurrilities by those who, adopting the dogmas and the language of a philosophy at war with nature, regard Religion as a mere engine of State. He has ventured to record far other sentiments on this important topick *. “ We know,” he says, “ and what is better, we feel inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort. In England we are so convinced of this, that there is no rust of superstition, with which the accumulated absurdity of the human mind might have crusted it over in the course of ages, that ninety-nine in an hundred of the people of England would not prefer to impiety. We shall never be such fools as to call in an enemy to the sub-

* Reflections.

stance of any system to remove its corruptions, to supply its defects, or to perfect its construction. If our religious tenets should ever want a further elucidation, we shall not call in Atheism to explain them. We shall not light up our temple from that unhallowed fire. It will be illuminated with other lights. It will be perfumed with other incense than the infectious stuff which is imported by the smugglers of adulterated metaphysics. If our ecclesiastical establishment should want a revision, it is not avarice or rapacity, publick or private, that we shall employ for the audit, or receipt, or application of its consecrated revenue. Violently condemning neither the Greek, nor the American, nor, since heats are subsided, the Roman system of religion, *we prefer the* PROTESTANT; not because we think it has less of the Christian religion in it, but because, in our judgment, it has more. WE ARE PROTESTANTS, *not from indifference, but from zeal.*" In what respect Mr. Burke's Protestantism differs from that of his opponents, may readily be conceived. Though
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he protests against the tenets and the spirit of the Church of Rome, he does not protest against the injunctions and the commands of God. He reverences the scriptures. He doubts not their divine original, though they enjoin submission to higher powers, and obedience to Kings.

We know that libertines and free thinkers, under the various denominations of atheists, deists, and dissenters, have long attacked, and continue to attack, in every possible mode, and with every possible weapon, which the cunning and chicane of disaffection can devise, not alone our religious establishment, not Christianity only, but every religious code that inculcates doctrines inimical to the private purposes and political heresies of those who hold the natural equality of man, and his final extinction in the grave. We know, that possessing such principles, and despairing to obtain those situations in the community which interest and ambition prompt them to covet, they conceive, and they cherish, an inveterate malignity, like that of Lucifer viewing Paradise, against
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the system that excludes them from the full enjoyment of that social happiness and those municipal advantages incident to unfeigned loyalty and political honesty. Hence is it that they join with atheistical, and with men of the most profligate principles; trusting, under the pretext of reform and improvement, to overthrow our national establishments, civil and ecclesiastical. And like the elegant, but sceptical Gibbon, who regarded Christianity but as an innovation on the ancient Pagan worship, and therefore endeavoured to sap its foundations, and undermine its authority; so these internal enemies to our happy Constitution meditate its destruction, as an infringement on the natural rights of man. They would have us abolish all the institutions produced by the legislative wisdom of ages; because under those institutions they cannot gratify the depraved passions and selfish appetites which it is the chief object of all civilization to check and controul. To those laudable restraints which make man happy in spite of his own nature; to those compacts which, as the grand efforts of reason,

son, so eminently distinguish us from the creatures that surround us; to those associating principles and political unions which bind, and unite, and strengthen all personal and all social felicity; they would prefer the natural rights of man: those enviable rights which our painted ancestors enjoyed in common with the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air.

Those who will not join in this retrograde march to freedom; who think it "good for us to be here;" who in opposition to the retreats of this indefinable liberty, prefer churches and palaces and the cheerful haunts of men, though marked with the lines of subordination and the divisions and subdivisions of civilized inequality; those are the devotees of usurped power, the "defenders of tyranny and superstition." Be it so. Applied by such men, and on such occasions, the language of reproach reflects honor on the censured in proportion to its violence.

But how shall precept succeed when example fails? The French have shewn us the way

way to their temple of liberty. They have illumined the path with conflagrations more glaring than a thousand comets. The most distant realms have been scorched by the blaze. They have sacrificed hecatombs to their goddess. Her domains are drenched in the costly blood of Princes; her rivers overflow with the gore of millions of subjects. Her terrifick voice is heard in every wind; she tyrannizes in every bosom. She aims at the sovereignty of the world: her janizaries, armed with power irresistible, bow every neck and bend every knee to this crimson Colossus, supported by the rights of man. And is this the Idol we are called upon to worship?—the liberty so proudly contrasted with British freedom?

“ Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,

“ ————— this the seat,

“ That we must change for heav’n; this mournful gloom

“ For that celestial light † ?”

† Milton.

That

That the principles of the French Revolution should have engendered this monster is not strange. And yet we are told, with never-ceasing falsehood, and in direct contradiction to what we see and what we feel, that "these principles are good*." And we are stunned with the applauses vociferated in honour of the metaphysical politicians and fans-culotte philosophers, who have had the ingenuity not only to frame such a variety and such discordant codes of legislation, but to reserve to themselves the most absolute authority for carrying them into execution. The effects we have seen, and have been compelled to feel. Neither have the tributes of approbation which they solicited been withheld. Our Revolutionary Societies, our demagogues of Chalk-farm, and of Copenhagen-house, and of Palace-yard, have been profuse in their testimonies of admiration. They have, with the true

* Sober Reflections on Burke's Letter, by John Thelwall.

fans-culotte authority, taken the proxies of the kingdom at large. They have anticipated the fraternal embrace. They
 “ have been long prepared to hail the triumphant entry of a Republican Representative ; and to exclaim, with equal sincerity and rapture,

“ Dicite, Io Pæan! et Io, bis dicite, Pæan!”*

If any thing could augment this sincerity and this rapture, it would be that the Republican Representative should be received by a Republican functionary.

If one might be permitted to judge of causes by their effects, and that it were not a mode of ratiocination incompatible with the new philosophy, the miseries, the calamities, the horrors, the aggregated sum of evil, which France has experienced, and under which she now labours, and shall long suffer, must be traced to the operation of

* Wakefield's Reply.

these boasted principles *. What Mr. Burke so many years ago predicted has come to pass. Not a single inference drawn by him from those principles has failed. In him it was not foresight, it was not prescience; he pretends to no prophetic powers. The principles and the conduct of the French philosophers and legislators formed a problem truly syllogistical; they furnished the major and the minor. It required no great powers of mind to discover the result of rebellion and tyranny and turpitude. It is not for a banditti to legislate. It is not for the governed to govern. It is not for a

* Long before the sans-culotte rulers came into power, and when the French imagined they were proceeding wisely and systematically, Mr Burke had occasion to remark; "Whether the system, if it deserves such a name, now built on the ruins of the ancient monarchy, will be able to give a better account of the population and wealth of the country, is a matter very doubtful. Instead of improving by the change, I apprehend that a long series of years must be told before it can recover in any degree the effects of this philosophical revolution, and before the nation can be replaced on its former footing."

Reflections.

rabble to comprehend the duties, much less to perform the functions, of a Statesman. Indeed we have heard much of French Generals and French Orators: of desperate men, who, at head of huge armies, equally desperate, have performed such exploits, and committed such ravages as unbridled ferocity can always accomplish, and unprincipled ambition will always attempt. And doubtless the multitude will hear with rapture, and applaud with enthusiasm, those Orators who shall defend such principles, and animate them to such conduct. But whence do they imbibe the principles, and how come they to adopt the conduct? It is acknowledged that they have produced consequences that disgrace not France only, or Europe, but the whole world and all the human race. Ashamed of this conduct, though glorying in the principles from which it springs, every fallacy of sophistry has been exerted to trace it to the former government, and as naturally flowing from the
 “ old

“ old despotism*.” The old despotism was sufficiently deformed, without covering it with the hideous garb of Republican philosophy. The tyrannies of the old despotism were very distinct from those of the new. The distinction is seen in their laws; it is felt in their effects: The old despotism did not authorize, nor could it have brought about the desolations, the wickedness, the unparalleled enormities which have so naturally, so inevitably, and so universally disgraced the new system.

To speak of a cannibal philosopher is, it should seem, to speak of an union that does not exist. It is, however, a Centaur of no fabulous complexion. Mr. Burke can feel no propensity to dignify the French rulers with the title of philosophers. It is an assumption of their own. They have preferred it to that of honest men. But take what appellation best pleases them, what epithet their vanity

* “ The imbecility of the philosophick, and the ferocity
“ of the energetick party, had their remote causes alike in
“ the vices and cruelties of the old despotism.”

Thelwall's Sober Reflections.

prompts

prompts them to adopt, to do them justice we are constrained to denominate them "cannibals," and cannibals of the fiercest kind. They are professors of the rights of man; they are, since they will have it so, philosophers; but they are neither good men, nor sound politicians. They have taught us to regard as simple truths what we have heretofore contemplated as the frightful fictions, and tremendous hieroglyphicks, of antiquity and romance. They have not only called into existence, but they have employed as their chief agents, the

"Gorgons, Monsters, and Chimeras dire,"

for which Imagination herself could scarcely find a local habitation or a name. Under the old despotism there were *MEN**; and the principle

* Revolutions in States usually produce *great men*. It has been justly observed that this of France has not. Madame Roland observes, that "France was in a manner destitute of *MEN*. Their scarcity has been truly surprising in this revolution, in which scarcely any thing but pigmies have appeared. I do not mean, however, that there was any want of wit, of knowledge, of learning,

principle of honour stimulated them to do deeds worthy of men, and of Frenchmen. The old despotism was not degraded by a national barbarity, by a ferocity more than brutal, by flagitiousness upon principle, alike infamous to the rulers and to the ruled. The national character was that of honour and humanity. The government, indeed, was not only bad in itself, but it was corrupt. Means were taken, and cheerfully adopted, to ameliorate the Government, and to stop the current of corruption. The national assembly did what

“ ing, of accomplishments, or of philosophy. These ingredients, on the contrary, were never so common. But as to that firmness of mind, which John James Rousseau has so well defined by calling it ‘ the first attribute of a Hero,’ supported by that soundness of judgment, which knows how to set a value upon things, and by those extensive views which penetrate into futurity, altogether constituting the character of a great man, they were sought for every where, and were scarcely any where to be found.”—To this passage justice is done by one of Mr. Burke’s antagonists, who also quotes it, with an exception in favour of some of the Mountain party, and of *Danton* in particular. What Madame Roland has, however, so judiciously observed, every one must feel to be true, without any exception.

became

became wise men and statesmen. But the completion of their system, at once salutary and politick, was prevented by their too early dissolution, and the consequent introduction of men far less able, and being of inferior orders and capacities, more inclined to those republican measures which proved the overthrow of the monarchy, and accelerated that dreadful innundation of horrible and indescribable mischiefs immediately resulting from principles which, we are told, with frontless audacity, had their origin in the old despotism. Under that despotism, indeed, there was a Bastille, the abode and bulwark of tyranny ; the foul reproach of the country. There was, indeed, a Bastille ; but there was only one. Every petty prison was not a prison of State. The Bastille was not crowded with the greatest men, and the best citizens. Many, too many, unhappy victims, some worthy and some worthless, in those cells, groaned with unavailing sorrow, and died the sacrifice of relentless cruelty. But the detested walls of the Bastille never inclosed thousands of the human race ; one hour hurried into its execrable confines, and dragged the

the next to the scaffold. All Europe rejoiced in the downfall of the Bastille, as in the destruction of something disgraceful to man. We rejoiced in the desolation of those gloomy towers that had, for so many centuries, intombed even the spirit of Liberty : but we never dreamt that it should prove the Hydra of despotism, from which should spring innumerable tyrannies, generating innumerable monsters ; rendering the realms of France “ regions of terror,” and its government the scourge of its inhabitants.

The cannibal philosophers, these legislators in blood, all whose policy consists in force, and whose wisdom is carried into effect by the guillotine ; these doughty doctors and their daring adherents, would willingly persuade us, that the Revolutionary principles which they so much applaud, and so incessantly recommend, are those “ humane, incontro-
 “ vertible, glorious principles that breathed
 “ through the speeches of the National Assem-
 “ bly, and enlarged at once the boundaries of
 “ science and philanthropy :” whereas the principles adopted, and the conduct pursued
 G by

by the National Convention, and all the subsequent rulers, were, and are, as opposite to those of the first National Assembly, and they were exceptionable enough, * as the conditions and faculties of the respective bodies of which they were composed. And it is not unworthy of remark, that the conduct of the Rulers has become more and more incompatible with real policy, or rather subversive of all civil and moral policy, in proportion as the ruling power has descended amongst, or been usurped by, the inferior orders of the community. It is not because there are not in those classes of society men eminent for virtue and talent.

“ Let us speak like politicians, there is a nobility without heraldry, a natural dignity whereby one man is ranked with another, another filed before him, according to the quality of his desert, and the pre-eminence of his good parts.” But it is because the influence of those individuals is weak when opposed to the will of the multitude, whose views they may be seduced to sanction

* See Reflections.

by ambition, or, indeed, by the hope of ultimately accomplishing their own virtuous designs. It has never yet been known when Power in the hands of the multitude, or of a Plebeian faction, has not been most grossly abused: not abused only, but rendered subservient to the worst of crimes. Individual worth is lost in that general mass of corruption; “ *that great enemy of reason, virtue, and religion, the Multitude, that numerous piece of monstrosity, which taken asunder seem men, and the reasonable creatures of God; but confused together make but one great beast, and a monstrosity more prodigious than Hydra**.” That the principles and conduct resulting from such a tyranny should be at all consonant with, or derived from, the despotism of an absolute monarchy, distinguished for the arts and the polish of civilized life, is a solecism which republican declamation will find it difficult to remove.

The teachers of the Rights of Man should recollect the difference between a civilized state and a state of nature. They say that

* Sir Thomas Browne.

all men are born equal. This is their text. Their comments are voluminous. Their glossaries are without end : but they all tend to enforce one conclusion, on which they erect their whole political system ; notwithstanding it is a conclusion which they cannot but feel to be politically and morally, naturally and necessarily false. They infer, that because all men are born equal, which however, is granting what they cannot prove, they must remain so. This is the first chapter of their Charter. But in no part of the globe can they find this Charter, either naturally or politically, unbroken. Even in the woods and wilds of savage life, in all animated nature, and through all created space, pre-eminence and subordination prevail. Society does not give them birth. They are the offspring of Nature, fulfilling the dictates of Providence. In a state of civilization, that is in a state where Reason acquires authority, and teaches men what is best to be done to improve their being, and enlarge their happiness, we find them diverging more and more widely from what these preachers would have us understand by
natural

natural equality : and every man will become more eminent than his fellow citizens, who shall possess in any extraordinary degree, the parts and accomplishments, the qualifications and requisites, which promote civilization and give to society all its advantages and all its charms. Government then begins to assume its legitimate form, and to accord with Nature ; to mark its boundaries, its distinctions, and discriminations : to establish the rights of community, meritorious claims, and individual honours. This is the operation of Sovereign Reason against whose authority they would oppose the surreptitious rights of man *. And this operation produces

* “ I have ever abhorred, since the first dawn of my understanding, to this its obscure twilight, all the operations of opinion, fancy, inclination, and will, in the affairs of Government, where only a *sovereign Reason*, paramount to all forms of legislation and administration should dictate. Government is made for the very purpose of opposing that reason to will, and to caprice, in the reformers, or in the reformed, in the governors, or in the governed ; in kings, in senates, or in people.”

Mr. Burke's Letter,

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produces in human society those indispensable inequalities which pervade the works of Nature, and which at once so admirably diversify and harmonize the whole. It is therefore observed by Mr. Burke, that though “ *numbers* in a state are always of consideration, they are not the whole consideration.” What can be done by numbers, without order and

So little have the French principles to do with Reason, that one of their admirers, after quoting the above passage, not without a hint of its *mysticism* and *nonsense*, exclaims, “ In the name of common sense how many gods has Mr. Burke in his mythology ? who is this *Sovereign Reason* ? “ In which of the seven heavens does she reside ? For he “ has told us [where ?] that in this world she is no where to “ be found.”

Thelwall's Sober Reflections.

It has generally been understood, that Reason has acquired her title to sovereignty, and all the honours which she inherits, from the circumstance of her forming that part of man which distinguishes him from the brute creation, by which he “approximates nearer to the Gods,” and is indeed the perfection of his nature. Mr. Thelwall by *Sovereign Reason* would have us to understand the “ collective reason of the *Sovereign People*.” Now the collective reason of the Sovereign People, that is, of the People he means, is little more than a natural instinct to do mischief: so common is it, in the absence of this Sovereign Reason, to mistake evil for good, and good for evil.

and subordination ? The French have let us see what is to be done when there is but little. And do not all states, and all bodies of people necessarily subside into order and subordination, naturally and inevitably producing an aristocracy, a democracy, and not unfrequently a monarchy ? In all these the weight and talents lie in the aristocracy ; because it is by the acquisition of power, acquired by virtues and talents, that the aristocracy is formed. Whence such a power is derived, and how utterly incapable the collective mass of the People are of acquiring it, will be seen if we at all consider of what it consists.

“ A true natural aristocracy is not a separate interest in the state, or separable from it. It is an essential integrant part of any large people rightly constituted. It is formed out of a class of legitimate presumptions, which, taken as generalities, must be admitted for actual truths. To be bred in a place of estimation ; To see nothing low and sordid from one's infancy ; To be taught to respect one's self ; To be habituated to the censorial inspection of the publick eye ; To look early to publick

lick opinion ; To stand upon such elevated ground as to be enabled to take a large view of the wide-spread and infinitely diversified combinations of men and affairs in a large society ; To have leisure to read, to reflect, to converse ; To be enabled to draw the court and attention of the wise and learned wherever they are to be found ; To be habituated in armies to command and to obey ; To be taught to despise danger in the pursuit of honour and duty ; To be formed to the greatest degree of vigilance, foresight and circumspection, in a state of things in which no fault is committed with impunity, and the slightest mistakes draw on the most ruinous consequences ; To be led to a guarded and regulated conduct, from a sense that you are considered as an instructor of your fellow citizens in their highest concerns, and that you act as a reconciler between God and man ; To be employed as an administrator of law and justice, and to be thereby amongst the first benefactors to mankind ; To be a professor of high science, or of liberal and ingenuous art ; To be amongst rich traders, who from their success are presumed

fumed to have sharp and vigorous understandings, and to possess the virtues of diligence, order, constancy, and regularity, and to have cultivated an habitual regard to commutative justice: These are the circumstances of men, that form what I should call a *natural* aristocracy, without which there is no nation*."

Civil society "necessarily generating this † aristocracy," is a state of nature: "for man
is

* Appeal.

† Though it is not for the French rulers and philosophers, nor for Mr. Thelwall and the disciples of the new lights, to discover any utility, on the contrary, nothing but great nuisance, and a formidable obstruction to the Rights of Man, in the aristocracy; some of the writers against Mr. Burke do allow that it has its virtues, and may be found useful, even in preserving the rights of the People. One of them observes, that the Nobility, "in their collective capacity, are placed as a barrier between the usurpations of prerogative, and the clamours of democracy. Our history abounds in instances where they have successfully withstood both. To the aristocracy of England we are indebted for no small portion of our liberties:—For the Magna Charta—For the Reformation, by the protection which some of them afforded, in its early stages, to the persecuted reformers, and by the spirit with which
H " they

is by nature reasonable ; and he is never perfectly in his natural state, but when he is placed where reason is best cultivated, and most predominates." The opinions and conduct of our new philosophers would go to destroy this " fair proportion of things ;" and, under an idea of the sovereignty of the People, reduce all government to that chaotic anarchy from which it has been, and always will be, the province of reason, and the object of all good and great men to rescue human nature : placing social and individual happiness on the firm basis of duty, trust, engagement and obligation. But the " majority and the sovereignty of the People" are the magick words that enchant and mislead the multitude ; they are the catch-words of sedition and rebellion : and it has been ignorantly by some, and artfully by others, maintained, that the majority of the People have a right to destroy all go-

" they resisted the papal usurpations—For the glorious Revolution, which the Aristocracy planned and effected," &c. &c.

Three Letters to the Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke. By an Old Whig.

vernment,

vernment, to dispense with all duty ; to cancel all obligation, to renounce all engagement. They are taught, “ by their infamous flatterers,” to believe that their power is irresistible and uncontroulable ; and that they can absolve themselves from the restraints of reason, morality and religion, when such is their sovereign will. Doctrines which Mr. Burke has always most strenuously denied, and has fully exposed, and irrefragably refuted* ; and which but to mention, in the way that they ought to be mentioned, must shock the very people they are intended to mislead.

But it seems that Mr. Burke has aimed a dagger at the heart of aristocracy, and shaken the foundation of all property : that he who has “ supported with very great zeal, and “ with some degree of success, those opinions, “ or those old prejudices which buoy up the “ ponderous mass of nobility, wealth and

* In the Appeal, in which the leading points of the vulgar sophistry and popular jargon of Paine are examined ; and respecting which, as they cannot reply, the lecturers, philosophers, and demagogues, have observed a profound silence.

“ titles,” has, in adverting to the origin of these distinctions in the House of Bedford, counteracted his own exertions, and subverted his own principles. It is the fate, not to say the intention, of party zeal to draw extraordinary and contradictory conclusions from the most simple propositions ; and the outcry against Mr. Burke on this occasion has been as clamorous as it is ridiculous. The Duke of Bedford thought proper, because, as his Grace says, Mr. Burke’s “ conduct and writings “ have, in an eminent degree, contributed to “ create and continue the war, and to cause “ all its consequent enormous expences ;” the noble Duke thought proper to declaim against His Majesty’s Ministers for lavishing a pension upon an “ avowed advocate of economy.” For it does not occur to his Grace that he who labours in the publick cause of publick economy, and who proposes and carries into effect measures at once prudent and salutary, is, even on the common scale of vulgar arithmetick, and in the estimation of economy itself, entitled to some portion of the emolument arising from such regulations,

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had he no other claim on publick gratitude. One might have imagined that a pension granted to a servant of the Crown, and of the Constitution, and of the People, and who had studied and maintained their respective interests and privileges, for so many years, might have escaped the animadversions of the noble Duke, and the Earl of Lauderdale; both of whom appear to consider it exceptionable, principally as it is given to him who has supported, and would, to the last, support, that Constitution and those principles which it is one object of the present war to preserve, and which it is the great object of the French and their abettors to demolish: because only in that demolition can they look for success: and because as long as that Constitution and those principles operate and endure, this Country shall retain her political consequence, her invincible freedom, her unrivalled splendour. That Mr. Burke's pension has not exceeded his deservings, he has, I think, made sufficiently clear in his Letter. It is his Grace's misfortune, and not Mr. Burke's fault, that the noble Duke should not
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be willing, or, as Mr. Burke says, able to estimate such services. I cannot, however, think so meanly of his Grace's powers of political calculation. Probably his party prejudices are much stronger than those powers. I must think he has talents superior to the petty pamphleteers who have so officiously obtruded their misconceptions on this occasion,

Scribimus indocti doctique *.

They cannot conceive that Mr. Burke can have merited his pension for eight and twenty years Parliamentary duty, and a great deal of it such as were enough to weigh down both the body and the mind; much less can they conceive how Mr. Burke could have earned his pension before he set his foot in Parliament. They have no conception (possibly his Grace has none) that, he deserves well of his country who shall so prepare himself for the exercises of a senator as to be able, on his coming into Parliament, to understand his duty; to be fitted and “disciplined for poli-

* Horace.

tical warfare." It surely requires no small portion of assiduous research, and labour, and study to become an active senator. It is easy to comprehend the objects and the policies of a party. But it requires something more to form a senator. " He must possess a fund of " knowledge that may enable him to act as " a part of the legislature. He must be well " acquainted with the history, the constitution, and the laws of the country. He " must understand the forms of business, the " extent of the Royal prerogative, the privilege of Parliament, the detail of Government, the nature and regulation of the " finances, the different branches of commerce, the politicks that prevail, and the " connexions that subsist amongst the different powers of Europe ; for on all these " subjects the deliberations of a House of " Commons occasionally turn *." It avails nothing to have had these requisites ; to have been indefatigable in the exercise of them ; to have passed a life of severe duty and incessant

* Smollett.

toil ; if towards its close he, who has thus exerted himself, shall, in the moment he is opposing desperate factions and flagitious principles, accept of reward from a gracious Prince. The Bedfords and the Lauderdale's will call it "unparalleled profusion," and vociferate with equal violence and injustice on the "enormity" of the grant, and deny the pretensions of him to whom it is given. Under the impressions of such censure, and not to impede the progress of any inquiry, for that, properly and fairly made, must have redounded to the credit and honour of Mr. Burke, there could surely be no impropriety in inquiring into the origin of those grants from which the Duke of Bedford derives his ample possessions. But in doing this, did Mr. Burke retort upon the noble Duke, by attacking his Grace's right to those possessions ? His Grace holds them as the descendant of a gentleman who had acquired the favour of a powerful monarch. "His grants," Mr. Burke has observed*, "are engrafted on the publick law of Europe,

* Letter.

" covered

“ covered with the awful hoar of innumera-
 “ ble ages. They are guarded by the sacred
 “ rules of prescription, found in that full
 “ treasury of jurisprudence from which the
 “ jejuneness and penury of our municipal law
 “ has, by degrees, been enriched and strength-
 “ ened. The Duke of Bedford will stand
 “ as long as prescriptive law endures.” We
 are not disputing his Grace’s title : it is fa-
 cred ; it is invulnerable to all things but the
 attacks of that revolutionary injustice, and
 those surreptitious principles of freedom, a-
 gainst the progress of which it has been found
 expedient, and right, and necessary to send
 forth our fleets and armies ; and against which,
 I hope and trust, the British Constitution will
 wage eternal war. For that enmity can never
 cease, while the Constitution lives ; and while
 the Constitution lives his Grace’s title is se-
 cure. French metaphysics cannot under-
 mine it. English sedition cannot shake it.
 The noble Duke calls in question Mr. Burke’s
 pretensions to his new pension. Mr. Burke
 does not call in question his Grace’s right to
 his old pensions. He does not call in question

the pretensions of the Earl to whom they were first granted : . He only shews what they were ; and contrasts them with his own. He questions not the authenticity of the original claims ; but he inquires into the merits of the claimant. His Grace, it is presumed, does not so much attack the prerogative from which Mr. Burke derives his pension, as impeach the *quantum meruit* of the Pensioner. Mr. Burke does not “ vex the receptacle of the dead, for evidence against the living*.” The characters and pretensions of his ancestors cannot affect his Grace, or disturb his title to their possessions. They must put a construction, equally strange and unwarrantable, on Mr. Burke’s remarks who call this elucidation of personal merits an “ unprincipled attack upon the peaceful security of all property †.” Yet from this forced and absurd construction, this *Ignorantia Elenchi*, the prejudiced commentators have drawn matter of much declamation against Mr. Burke, and en-

* Street’s Vindication.

† Thelwall’s Sober Reflections.

riched their pages with invective; displaying the ingenuity of their censorial capacities, by reviling him for principles which he never held, and combating positions which he never advanced.

The same misconception, I believe rather assumed than real, and the same ingenuity is employed to convert Mr. Burke's raillery on the official historians of the Heralds college, into a dissertation on the origin of property, and a "disquisition on hereditary honours*": they adduce and misapply, a point of pleasantry, or an effusion of irony, as an argument to shew Mr. Burke's disaffection to the aristocracy, without which he says, "there can be no nation;" and cite it as a "democrattick contribution to the labours of Priestley and of Paine."†

It has been observed, with that degree of sapience and of malignant inuendo which characterises the productions I am now noticing, that the grants to Mr. Russell added

* Mr. Burke's Conduct and Pretensions Considered, &c.
By a Royalist.

† Ibid.

not to the burthens of the nation. I may ask, did his labours, in any respect, contribute to the welfare of the nation? Did not "those prodigies of profuse donation trample on the mediocrity of humble and laborious individuals," without throwing back on the community any publick benefits that could justify the receiver, or apologise for the Sovereign? But in asking this, is it meant to "preclude the Duke of Bedford from attacking a profuse or unmerited grant of the Crown?" Is Mr. Burke unwilling to concede to his Grace the right which Mr. Burke is himself exercising? Certainly not. By tracing the source of his Grace's wealth, is it meant to justify any similar profusion? Far from it. The inquiry is as to the *quantum meruit*. That of the noble Duke is not disputed. It is such, no doubt, as his habits, his education, and his years, may naturally be supposed to produce. But it is not from HIS *quantum meruit* that his Grace derives his possessions. They are derived from that of another. And since the noble Duke contests the propriety of pensioning Mr. Burke, who has no other claim than
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that of merit, where is the irrelevancy of contrasting such merit with that which formed the basis of his Grace's fortunes? Mr. Burke has been censured for not noticing the intermediate branches of the House of Russell: it is even insinuated that he is no friend to the Protestant cause and the cause of Freedom (in defence of which he has spent a long life), inasmuch as he has not paid a passing tribute to the excellence of Lord William Russell. But I may ask, did the wealth of the House of Bedford flow from the blood shed by that nobleman on the scaffold? Is it in Lord William's merit, or his virtue, or his patriotism, that the noble Duke finds the origin of his property? No: but those qualities in one of his Grace's predecessors gives to his title an additional strength, and a collateral security, no less honorable than binding, in the gratitude of his country. Let us hope that the noble Duke will give it additional lustre, by "employing all the energy of his youth, and all the resources of his wealth, to crush rebellious principles which have no foundation

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tion in morals, and rebellious movements, that have no provocation in tyranny."

That Mr. Burke's investigations on this subject should prove prejudicial to aristocracy, or shake the foundations of property, is a conclusion not easily deducible from the premises. I must repeat, that he is ascertaining merits, and not subverting titles. He is said "to change the respect of the multitude for property into disgust; to let loose their enraged passions on that wealth which is the object of their perpetual envy; and to lend even to rapine itself some of the features and lineaments of justice*." There is nothing capable of changing into disgust the general respect for property or power, but the abuse of it. From the demerits of the first Earl of Russell they will feel no claim to attack the possessions of the Duke of Bedford. Nothing can abate their respect and reverence for his Grace's property, and the laws that secure it, but the infusion of principles destructive of all rights, and subversive of all

* Monthly Review for March, 1796.

laws. Nothing can shake aristocracy but the conduct of its own members. If they, like the detestable Orleans, shall countenance Plebeian factions, and betray their own interest; if they shall renounce their own dignity, and question their own privileges; if they shall assemble the populace, and harangue mobs on momentous points, fit only for the discussion of deliberate Councils and grave Senates; if they shall appeal to judgments which they ought to inform, and to passions which they ought to controul; it is then indeed, that they “lend even to rapine itself some of the features and lineaments of justice.” Then trembles the “Corinthian capital of polished society.” Then is undermined the deep base of hereditary property. If such nobles have no designs against the peace or the constitution of their country; and I am willing to allow them good motives, for I pretend not to search into the hearts of men; yet are they by this conduct abetting those who have. They are abetting the internal enemy. They are strengthening the hands of the domestick foe. This mode of poisoning the minds of the People,

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and of weakening the energies of Government, is more to be dreaded, and more worthy of reprehension, because more dangerous, than transmitting to the French convention, revolutionary presents and seditious resolutions.

Abhorring such principles, and censuring such proceedings, with an indignation not easily expressed, and which he could never wish to express but in terms appropriate to his feelings, Mr. Burke has been accused of recording the effusions of rashness and anger, rather than the results of reason and dispassionate investigation. I cannot envy the critical sagacity, the "cold heads and lukewarm hearts," of those who read with a spirit so different from that of a writer, as neither to taste, nor to comprehend, those figurative expressions which strength of feeling always produces, and which serve to illustrate opinion, and to confirm truth: a mode of expression which it is the easiest task of malignity to pervert, and of dulness to ridicule. The Reflections on the French Revolution afforded some scope for the display of these minor wits and turbulent politicians, whose minds are darkened by the
boasted

boasted effulgence of their new lights, and their hearts hardened by philosophical ferocity. These are the true fans-culotte criticks. They not only rejoice in the degradation, the deposing, and the murdering of the King and Queen of France; but their feelings are so far rarified and subtilized by their metaphysics which lift them above humanity, as to hold in high derision all such as contemplate those dreadful scenes with any sensation of horror. And he could never hope, nor could he ever wish, to escape their contemptuous raillery, who, in lamenting the fate of those illustrious sufferers, could not but regret the extinction of that heroick virtue which distinguished even the days of chivalry; when ferocity itself was not barbarized and reduced into system by sentiment; nor the sacred rights of nature usurped by the factitious rights of man. The invincible detestation which Mr. Burke has, in his late Letter, expressed for the monsters who have perpetrated these crimes, and who have deluged Europe with blood; that invincible detestation has, in no less degree, excited the fury of these philo-

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phical “ lovers of mankind,” these “ universal patriots,” whose open cry is for Reformation and peace, and whose private projects are for innovation and plunder. Happy must Mr. Burke be to have merited their enmity, which he ought to consider as additional proofs that he has “ produced some part of the effect proposed by his endeavours.”

To these feelings of the heart, this fervour of principle, the opponents of Mr. Burke are unwilling, on any occasion, to assign any good motive. They can find no apology for enthusiasm, but in favour of sedition: no virtue in principle, but as it promotes discontent. Even his exertions, his nightly study and his daily toil, for so many years respecting the intricate, involved, and comprehensive affairs of India, are regarded by them as petty labours, to accomplish base purposes. Such is the extent of *their* inquiries; such the inference of *their* liberality; such the complexion of *their* minds. Nor could he advert to these exertions, nor to any of his services, without being censured

censured as an * Egotist, by men who seem
 as utterly unacquainted with the subject, as
 they are with decency; and who, in repre-
 senting Mr. Burke as bereft of reason, and
 as the disciple of envy and malignity, and
 of all the fouler passions, do this in terms
 to convince the world how admirably they
 can pourtray themselves: for it is not less
 remarkable than true, that, with very few
 exceptions, these sagacious, heart-reading
 observers, have not attributed to Mr. Burke
 a single mode of abuse with which they have
 not loaded their own pages; and in their
 endeavours to soar a little beyond the "vi-
 sible diurnal sphere" of their vapid decla-
 mation,

* The venerable Plutarch has enumerated a variety of
 cases wherein a modest man may even praise himself, and
 when it is his duty to do so.—Mr. Burke has, on a fair
 and proper occasion, stated some of those services that have
 been thought worthy of the remuneration which he has re-
 ceived. Is it because they cannot contradict the facts that
 the pamphlet-writers are so eager to depreciate the merits;
 and ascribe to Mr. Burke a disgusting degree of self-praise?
 But we hear nothing of this when the gentlemen speak of
 Mr. Burke's *former* services, *i. e.* of services, which, though
 done on the great scale of national good, happened to cor-
 respond with the minutiae of *their* politicks.

mation, one may well say of them, as the incomparable Dunning, in his Letters of Junius, said of Sir William Draper, that they possess the “ melancholy madness of poetry, without its inspiration.” And in point of Egotism, without any pretensions to public notice, how infinitely do they surpass Mr. Burke !—how continually are we reminded of the purity of their principles, and the virtues of their independence !—of worthless pensioners, and of unconstitutional pensions ! They seem to have generated in their minds an antipathy to the word pensions. One of them, indeed, after enumerating the advantages resulting from “ landed pensions,” takes notice to remark, * that Pensions such as Mr. Burke’s “ cannot well be “ applied to purposes of national improvement; for their avowed and proper object is to reward or relieve indigent merit.” But how shall he find favour in the eyes of those who assume all public virtue to themselves and their party ; and who are inca-

* Miles’s Letter.

pable of combining the efforts of a long life, when its last act shall clash with their views? What merit shall he claim who seeks to root up those principles, and oppose those practices, which would deprive the Crown of the power and the means of rewarding or of relieving indigent merit? Shall he then who has laboured for the Publick go unrewarded, because it is dogmatically said his remuneration, which he receives as the effect of national gratitude, "cannot well be applied to purposes of national improvement?" Surely, the property thus honourably acquired is at least as beneficial to the community as any personal property arising from labour. It circulates as other monied property: and if applied in the purchase of lands, may, proportionably, become of as great publick utility as the Bedford estates: for, doubtless the "landed pensioner," would take example from the noble Duke's prudence and patriotism, and render his property as productive as possible. But since pensions are so obnoxious, in what way
would

would these fastidious gentlemen “ reward or relieve indigent merit,” or publick services? Is the present mode more exceptionable than confiscation and plunder? Or is it impossible to become publickly beneficial without adopting the cannibal philosophy of France; and impossible to reward such merit, but by a distribution of all property among all men*, accord-

* This is seriously recommended in a “ Warm Reply to Mr. Burke, by A. Macleod:—” “ All we have to do,” says this warm writer, “ consists in candidly acknowledging the right of personal security and personal comfort. “ If at present these are not enjoyed, prudence should dictate an immediate adoption of such regulations as would ultimately procure them. *Every subject of these kingdoms, by a fair distribution of the national purse, might be raised to honourable independence.* Now, however, a servile coincidence with the nod of power alone distinguishes the sons of Britain. Mortifying condition! abject men!”—This gentleman writes a great deal about the “ tree of knowledge, original sin, and how “ painful it is to be virtuous in this age.”—He exclaims, “ Ah! this age! Curse the age, and curse the people too, who can basely compromise their liberties for gold, and barter heaven for a currie!”—He allows that he is sometimes *in a passion*: “ If I were in a passion, the criticks must know, or if they
“ will

according to the strict laws of Equality, and the admirable institutes of the fans-culotte code?

The adversaries of Mr. Burke are willing to believe that his Pension is given him for his writings in favour of monarchy, and of the war with France. But they are unable to point out a passage in those writings wherein he

“ will not, they, and the whole world may, that the ap-
 “ proaching dissolution of order, the approaching depreda-
 “ tion of humanity, the approaching funeral of Britain made
 “ me so: and far from correcting these inbred transports,
 “ I yield to their fervour, I cherish all their warmth; they
 “ shall animate my last breath, and the gasp will be for li-
 “ berty!”—Could *Bully Bottom* † have said more?—But Mr. Macleod is in a still greater passion about liberty:—“ Only
 “ such men as Mr. Burke,” he says, “ would dare to as-
 “ sert, that Englishmen owe their liberties to the House of
 “ Orange. I declare that, when reading that assertion, I
 “ could not resist emotions at once indignant and scornful:
 “ I even said in my heart, *damn the man!*”—All this, however, is to be forgiven, when we find the Author, in a lucid interval, observing, very truly, that his “ con-
 “ clusions will be pronounced the ravings of a heated ima-
 “ gination, the dreams of an eager theorist, or the augur-
 “ ings of a disaffected man.”—Doubtless, these causes have, jointly or severally, produced the “ *Warm Reply.*”

† Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream.*

he has either injured or misrepresented the Constitution of England. What he has said in regard to the monarchy of France, he will hardly be induced to give up, till the prosperity of that country, under any other form of government, shall compel him to renounce those ideas which have been strengthened and confirmed by the uncontrollable events of several successive years. To the necessity and the justice of our war with France neither the friends nor the enemies of Mr. Burke are strangers. That necessity and that justice have been repeatedly demonstrated both in and out of Parliament. They were, and yet are, intimately felt by every man who has the least sense of national honour, of general prosperity, or of social rights. The meanest peasant in the kingdom, not infected with French madness, or the Old Jewry disease, felt an instinctive enmity against the common foes of all civilized society. He felt that reason and the rights of human nature were violated and invaded by a fierce banditti. All his moral feelings were roused. Even he comprehended, because he felt, that we warred not with principles,

ciples, merely speculative : that were indeed to fight with phantoms ; but that we warred with principles carried into practice : with principles and opinions which urged a lawless horde to rise against the privileges and the well-being of every community, and of all mankind ; and which it therefore became a duty, and an indispensable necessity, to oppose. He was stimulated by the united energies of the best passions to contend for the preservation of the best and dearest rights : individual felicity and social happiness. It was not with him a contest for power, for dominion, for pre-eminence in the scale of nations ; it was a contest to preserve the liberties, the religion, the laws, the very existence of his own country, against the invasion of an enthusiastick, and presumptuous tyranny. The French Tree of Liberty he wished not to see planted in his native soil. But, in proportion as he venerated the old English Oak, he abhorred that noisome exotick : the baleful Tree, with its poisonous berries, and its deadly leaves ; for he found wherever it struck its root, the passing winds wafted from its noxious branches

L pestilence

pestilence and death. He perceived himself called upon not more as a member of a great kingdom, than as a man, to unite in resisting those who had not only overthrown their own government, and desolated their own country, but invited, nay insisted on, surrounding nations, to join them in a general havock for the destruction of every thing sacred and valuable to the human race. If what he felt was strongly impressed on the minds and hearts of the people at large; and that, with the exception of a few seditious clubs, cannot be contradicted: if the Publick thus felt, without adverting to the extensive and important motives operating on the minds of Statesmen; Mr. Burke might reasonably conclude that the heart of Lord Keppel, had he been living, would have beat in unison; because he was as well politically as morally just *. His honesty was

* His Lordship was of a different opinion from one of Mr. Burke's opponents: " I remember once dining with a gentleman who was formerly in Parliament, and with whom I have lived in habits of familiar intercourse; but he much shocked me by questioning the honesty of
" all

was indivisible. He had not one system of ethicks for his publick, and another for his private, conduct. A nobleman possessing such a mind, influenced by such principles, would scarcely have been devoid of those sensations which evidently pervaded the breast of every man in Europe, who had the least pretension

“ all men in politicks: *arguing from my own feelings, and referring him to my own history* †, I supported a contrary opinion. Experience, however, has convinced me, that my friend, although far from being right to the full extent of his assertion, knew mankind much better than I did.”

Miles's Letter.

† I will not say any thing of Mr. Miles's *egotism*, of which this is but as a grain from a mountain: neither will I ask whether he now refers to his own experience, his own feelings, or his own history, for a confirmation of his friend's knowledge of mankind: I will only say, that there cannot be a position more false, or more dangerous, than this of universal depravity. When such ideas are disseminated by men who are supposed to know the world, as the ideas of higher classes of society, those of the lower think themselves authorized to hold the same opinions, and to practise upon them. He who has a bad opinion of mankind cannot be surprized if mankind have no good opinion of him.

tenſion to a regard for juſtice or humanity. In proportion as his Lordſhip's regard for inef- timable qualities was ſtronger than thoſe of ordinary men, ſo much more ſtrongly would he have felt the neceſſity and the juſtice of the war: for he well knew, that not to go againſt fleets of pirates, and armies of robbers, were to countenance them; and that he who is careleſs of the inſtitutions of other governments and of neighbouring ſtates, cannot be ſuppoſed friendly to any government; ſince he evinces a willingneſs to ſanction a conduct tending to the deſtruction of all.

But we are told, that the French have given up their moſt flagitious principles, and renounced the “glorious idea” of reducing all eſtabliſhed governments to the level of their own miſerable chaos; and that, therefore, we ſhould attend to terms of peace. It is well for THEM, if they have done ſo. But how far that conſideration ought to induce this country to abandon the war, without accompliſhing its original object: how far the ſecondary conſideration of expence, ought to induce us to ſacrifice the dignity and the glory of
of

of the country, by accepting of disgraceful terms, or of any terms, short of the most advantageous and the most honourable ; must be left for those subsequent discussions in which the observations of Mr. Adair* and others may find some attention.

Meanwhile, let it always be recollected that, whoever shall be responsible, the war was unavoidable. “ Formerly,” says Mr. Burke, in addressing himself to a Gentleman in Paris, “ formerly your affairs were your own concern only. We felt for them as men ; but we kept aloof from them, because we were not citizens of France. But when we see the model held up to ourselves, we must feel as Englishmen, and feeling, we must provide as Englishmen. *Your affairs, in spite of us, are made a part of our interest ;* so far at least as to keep at a distance your panacea, or your plague. If it be a panacea, we do not want it : we know the consequences of unnecessary physick. If it be a plague, it is such a plague,

* See Part of a Letter from Robert Adair, Esq. to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox.

that

that the precautions of the most severe quarantine ought to be established against it."* Several of Mr. Burke's opponents contend that the war was necessary : neither party prejudice nor false philosophy having superseded, in this instance, their natural sense of right and wrong.

When it is considered who and what they are that have brought the present calamities upon their own country, upon this country, and upon Europe in general : that, in imitation of the most disgraceful act recorded in English history, they have murdered their King ; thereby giving a horrid testimony of their renunciation of every thing sacred and binding among men : that they murdered a Queen, whose only fault was that, if she had the influence she is believed to have had, she did not exert it to yoke the wolves howling to devour her : that they murdered a Princess and a Prince, equally innocent, the Sister and the Son of these illustrious sufferers : that, not content with thus shedding the Royal blood of their own country, they incited, and offered to aid and assist other countries, particularly

* Reflections.

this

this kingdom, to commit the like enormities, and to lay waste the whole religious and moral, civil and political world: when these things are at all considered, with the circumstances attached to them, it cannot be thought surprising that Mr. Burke should express his abhorrence of a Peace with Regicide. He has been censured as the author of a war that was unavoidable. It is a censure which, however just or erroneous, does him honour. He is thus censured for being a friend to the human race, and especially to Great Britain, the total overthrow of whose Government was not less the object of Conventional determination, both at home and abroad, than the extinction of the French monarchy.—If his labours have contributed to create him personal enemies among those who wish to reduce their new principles to practice, Mr. Burke must rest satisfied with the approbation of all such as feel a real concern for the safety and happiness of the country.



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